

***Kore wa Owari Janai (This is Not the End): Translation of an English Short Story to  
Japanese and to Illustrated Work***

**An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)**

**by**

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## Abstract

Japanese and English are two different languages hailing from two equally different cultures. This vast gap can oftentimes create complicated and difficult situations for translators and interpreters, who have to not only convert one language to another but also have to explain cultural differences in order to create a sense of true understanding. However, when moving from English to Japanese, and vice versa, each language culture can sometimes lack the equivalent vocabulary to accurately portray the author's intention. Thus, I sought to translate my own short story from its original English into Japanese as accurately as possible. Then, to incorporate my own passion for drawing, I converted the story from its written medium to a visual one in a manga-style adaptation. The result is a short story and manga in both English and Japanese.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## Process Analysis

This project actually began several months ago while I was studying abroad in Japan at Tōkyō Gakugei University. In my downtime one night I was scrolling through one of my social media pages and came upon an interesting post from a blog which uploads story ideas and short sentences as inspiration for writers. The specific prompt was: *If you can hear it, then you are already dead* (Writing, 2017). This sparked my imagination and I sat down to start writing the story that night. I wrote bits and pieces of it for a few weeks, never with an end in mind, but following the story where my imagination took me. I finished it, and posted it to my own social media account to share with friends, but school retook my attention and I quickly forgot about it.

I remembered it when I was back home in the U.S. and contemplating a thesis topic for this project. While discussing it with my parents, my mother suggested I work with something I had created myself in combination with my Japanese language skills and love of drawing. This brought to mind the story I had written all those months ago while in Japan and I decided to revisit it for this project. Not only did I wish to translate the story from its original English to Japanese, but I also wanted to shift it to a visual medium by drawing a manga adaptation in both languages. This allowed me to work on an academic level with the knowledge I had acquired during my studies, and permitted me some creativity and freedom of expression in the final project. The first part of my thesis was the translation of my short story, which perhaps turned out to be the more enjoyable part.

I initially began work on the translation as it would serve as the base for the manga adaptation. When I started out I was quite motivated and excited, as I typically am for long-term projects. I began by working from the English story one paragraph at a time creating a list of vocabulary I did not know. After that, I used a variety of Japanese-English dictionaries to find



equivalents that matched the original context. This research was the most time-consuming part because there are multiple words in Japanese which can have the same English meaning, but their usage and writing style gives nuance to its true connotations. In Japanese, there are three writing systems: kanji, hiragana, and katakana. Kanji, the complex characters, and hiragana, the base phonetic writing system, are the most common medium of writing, and katakana is a system reserved for foreign words. Most often, kanji in different combinations can imply different words and subtle variations even if they technically have the same pronunciation. Determining which word is appropriate for what situation requires knowledge of the word along with its kanji and contextual information. Where I still struggle in my own language acquisition is with vocabulary, so I spent quite a bit of time researching across various sources to determine which word was appropriate for the situation. Once I had defined all of the vocabulary, I used my own grammar knowledge along with some help from my textbooks when I did not specifically recall a pattern to translate each paragraph sentence by sentence. This actually turned out to be the simplest part of the project and one I completed fairly quickly.

The next part was obtaining feedback and suggestions from my advisor, Dr. Sadatoshi Tomizawa, who is a native speaker of Japanese. He would read my translation, compare the meaning to the original English, and then highlight specific areas which required corrections or reformatting. One of my most common errors was in dealing with transitive and intransitive verbs along with their associated particles. Transitive verbs indicate that an action is performed by someone on something, for example: *watashi wa doa o shimemashita* (I closed the door). In contrast, intransitive verbs indicate something happens because something acted on its own: *doa ga shimarimashita* (The door closed). This is a stumbling point for many language learners, so

this was good practice for me with a difficult grammar pattern. I expected this to a certain degree since I am still learning, but there were some unexpected challenges along the way.

One of these difficulties was the difference in my own writing style and the Japanese one I had been learning up until this point. When I write fiction in English, I tend to write in a poetic manner which also follows a stream of consciousness style. The result still uses full complete sentences, but it is punctuated by short or sometimes incomplete sentences ending with ellipses. This implies to me a sense of a person's thought process which can be erratic and incomplete. Thus, this left some uncertainty or vagueness to be interpreted by the reader; however, this style confused my advisor at times. This also made translating difficult, because at some points the sentence structure in English did not match up exactly with the Japanese equivalent, so some parts of the translated story read strangely. This meant I had to modify the translated text to read correctly in Japanese while still reflecting the English meaning. Despite these hurdles, the challenge this posed for both my advisor and me proved an enjoyable one and I am quite pleased with the end result. For me, this part of the project gave me confidence in my Japanese language skills and that my time abroad positively impacted my learning.

After all of the translation work had been completed, I began work on the second half of my project: the manga adaptation. Manga is effectively the Japanese version of a graphic novel, with stories that can run across several different genres, from samurai to supernatural monsters, and from slice-of-life high school drama to passionate romances. All manga carry with them some form of Japanese influence, which gives readers an introduction to aspects of the culture and its unique art style. I first began reading manga when I was about 13 years old in middle school and I initially aspired to become a manga artist. However, I later learned what the job entailed and decided it was not the correct path for me. Instead, I began learning about Japanese



as a language and this shift led me to my degree in Japanese at Ball State University. On the more creative side, reading manga has also influenced my art style over the years. I have been drawing ever since I could remember, and discovering manga had a definite impact on my personal style which has carried through to the present day. Since it is such a large part of my identity, I was happy to be able to do something creative for my thesis. What I did not expect though, was just how time consuming it would become.

My first step after translating was to determine which lines of text I needed for my manga. Every single line of text was not required as many specific details could be communicated through images rather than using words to directly tell the reader. Once I had picked out which pieces of the text I required, I was able to move on to the next step: sketching out the rough drafts.

This was one of the places I ran into problems with my own artistic process. When I work on my own pieces, I can typically spend as much time as I like sketching out an image and determining the finer details. I also like to have all of these details done before moving on, as I have a perfectionist streak which drives me to create a clean sketch first. This proved to be an obstacle for me, as I did not have the luxury of unlimited time with this part. I initially started out on the first few pages taking my time and cleaning everything up, but this proved to be too time consuming and I was forced to work against my own habits. I had to quickly move the image in my head onto paper, something I do not usually do, but this was not a bad thing. Sometimes I become too obsessed over details in an image and will trap myself in a cycle of erasing, re-drawing, and erasing again rather than moving on to work on something else. Having to work under a time constraint helped me overcome the habit and showed me that sometimes a messy sketch is better than no sketch.



After I had sketched all of the pages, I moved on to the next phase which was to create the line art. Traditionally most manga artists work in a physical medium using pens and ink to illustrate their stories but I decided to pursue the digital option instead. Digital art is a growing field I used to avoid due to my own prejudices as a traditional artist and due to the fact I never quite adapted to using a tablet and monitor for art. That all changed when I was introduced to Apple's iPad in conjunction with their new stylus, the Apple Pencil, and it showed me just how useful it can be to work digitally. Alongside my new tech, I also found a drawing program called Medibang Paint for iOS, a program which comes with tools to create comics and manga. This would help me save time, and would allow me to easily create both versions of the final manga. Utilizing both these tools, I began to trace the basic line art from photos of my rough sketches. This started out fairly enjoyable for me, as line art is often my favorite part of a piece to do. However, I began to realize there was a downside. Working for so long with the same technique was almost too much of a good thing and I found myself frustrated and losing motivation by the time I had finished. I was tired of doing the same thing over and over, and I was relieved to move on.

As it turned out, the next part became the most stressful portion of the project. This was the process of adding the grayscale color on every page, which would not only allow me to add depth to the scenes, but also any atmosphere and effects. At first, I didn't think it would require too much time to complete, after all I was just using shades of gray. What I did not anticipate was just how much time it would require to shade every page and I started this part later than I had anticipated. I found myself rushed to complete all of the pages to the standard I wanted, and was working on it up until the last minute. In the end, what is usually the most enjoyable part of

my project ended up being the most stressful, mostly due to my own habits and underestimating the time required to complete it.

While the last part was most certainly stressful and caused me some frustration, it also served as a valuable opportunity for me to learn about myself and achieve some things I did not think I was capable of doing. One of these feats was drawing the protagonist at varying stages of life, while keeping them recognizable as the same person. I have always struggled to draw characters consistently, as some aspect always ends up different from piece to piece. I was happy to hear from my advisor that the protagonist was recognizable as the same character across the whole work. Other aspects I struggle with are both proportion and perspective. Proportion is how specific parts of an image appear in relation to another, such as body proportions with humans and humanoid figures. Humans have distinct points at which their bodies bend and grow which determines how they move and look. Perspective is the viewpoint from which a scene is captured and determines height, size, and distance from the viewer. Since I have struggled with both of these aspects in the past I avoided practicing them out of fear I would not do it correctly or it would turn out badly. This project forced me to practice both by drawing characters in relation to each other along with interior scenes consisting of various furniture and household fixtures. The last point which I was pleasantly surprised about was my ability to tell a story through visual media. I always admired and appreciated a manga artist's ability to communicate a story through this form, partially because I was always more used to doing the same thing through writing. Up until this point, I never thought I would be able to combine the two well enough to coherently tell a story. All of these points are things I previously had little to no experience, or confidence, in doing as an artist, but working on this

project forced me to practice them. In the end, I found myself pleasantly surprised at how much I had accomplished and showed me how valuable it is to practice in areas I'm not proficient in.

At the end of the day, while this project was an excellent academic and creative exercise, the greatest lesson I learned from it was to have confidence in my work. Most of the time I try to appear humble and to not tout my accomplishments too much, but this is due to my own lack of self-confidence rather than true humbleness. This has been a struggle for me for several years, and I oftentimes find it difficult to find things I can feel honestly proud of completing. However, I can say I am proud of myself for completing this project and the work I have done. Not only did I prove that my time abroad improved my ability to translate between two languages, but it also showed me I can become a capable artist provided I practice the techniques I am afraid to do. Beyond myself, I hope this project serves some purpose for others too. My main hope is that the copy my advisor has can be an example to someone and inspire them to pursue their own creative ventures alongside their academic studies. If this did come to pass, I would be even more pleased with the work I have completed.



## Original English Story

I heard it first when I was eight years old...

Standing in the backyard, tears down my face, cardboard box at my feet. It was the third hamster I'd gone through, woken up to find cold and unmoving in its cage that morning. I didn't even bother waking my parents this time...

I had dug the hole with a spade from the garage, parting sod and splitting earthworms as I excavated the makeshift grave. It wasn't until I was standing over it, chubby fingers clasped in a small prayer for the small soul, that the tears began...

And then I heard it...

I thought it was the new wind chime mom had bought the other day, a big wooden one from the gift store, to commemorate 3 years since we had moved...

But then I remembered how she hadn't put it up yet, it had been sitting next to the spade in the garage. The sound rattled and clanked with hollow clinks, rasping like an exhaled breath, mumbled words which filled my ears...

And it was gone again, like a gust of wind. With a shiver I settled the shoe-box in the hole, whispered one last 'good-bye' and covered it with dirt. I never got another hamster after that, and we sold the cage and toys at the next community garage sale.

I forgot about the sound...

I heard it again when I was 15 in the hospital room. He had been ill for a while, but dad was stubborn, and insisted the symptoms would go away of their own accord.

"I've got a strong immune system! I'll be fine!"



*I'll be fine*, I told myself when they pulled mom and me from the waiting room. I slouched behind her, convinced in my teenage consciousness that I was a victim of helicopter parenting, that I would rather be anywhere else...

All a ruse of course, inside I was terrified.

*It's stage three cancer...*

And then the news shattered everything. It filled the days after with surgeries, missed classes, hospital visits, and support groups. The five months went by in a tense blur...

I heard it again Saturday night, the day he passed away. I was settled in one of the cushy chairs in the far corner, my refuge and home away from home. My pile of homework sat on the floor next to me, my eyes blankly on the TV, not even bothering to absorb the late-night dramas which flashed on the screen. I was drifting off to sleep as the clock on the bedside table read 10:48 pm...

The rattling came first, vague and almost toy-like, like plastic kind of. Was there someone outside the door?

Then the exhale of breath... More menacing this time, louder and deeper, with the gravel of grinding stone...

The room felt several degrees cooler. This time the edges of my vision grew darker, and a shape fluttered at the edge of my vision. The pressure in the room began to increase, I couldn't breathe...

The voice rattled forth, clearer this time than when I was eight...

*Join.... Join... until... part-... -ing...*

The darkness that came after was total, and I don't recall the rest of the night...  
The only difference in the morning was the heavy darkness around my shoulders, and the bustle of doctors and nurses...

*We are sorry... We are sorry... We are sorry...*

The darkness remained all through high school. No matter how many sports or clubs I joined, or what grades I got, it remained a physical weight upon me.

It got worse senior year of college. Between term papers and job interviews, I hadn't been paying much attention to the people around me. Last relationship had ended badly, my roommate was rarely home, I existed in a space between sleep-deprivation and caffeine induced tremors. I hadn't noticed that the girl who sat behind me in one of the 400-level lectures had missed class for the past three weeks...

Her vigil was held a week before graduation, in the courtyard in front of the student life building. 10 pm but there were few stars in the sky over us as we stood in silence on the concrete. Candles created pinpricks of light and cast golden glows upon students' faces. It would have been beautiful, if the weight on my shoulders hadn't been tugging on my skin on my back, digging through dermis and muscle...

The girls' friends were speaking, remembrance, epithets, but I heard none of it; the rattling had begun again. I had found a similar sound since I heard it, a name for an unknown terror: bones in the wind. The heavy breathing sounded again, loud in my ears and cold on my neck; cold, heavy air pressed down as the candles dimmed before my eyes. Their light not only faded, but seemed to be pulled from the source into the void between the individuals gathered.

And from the void they came. Tall, dark, and hunched they loomed over us, swaying in the breeze. The voice that spoke came from where their faces should be...

*Join us in remembrance, Join us in frozen time, Until all clouds are gathered, Gathering over mine...*

The words repeated over and over were like prayer or worship, spoken like they were etched into bones by constant practice. Like a mantra, they swayed and spoke in time to unseen instruments...

I don't think the others noticed when I fled the vigil, melted wax burning my hands and eyes wide in terror.

Since then, the rattles are everywhere. I feel like I've been running from them for so long now. I can't hold a job for more than a year, and I've moved more times than I can count on both hands. I sleep with earplugs in, to keep the sounds out the best I can...

But tonight they are especially bad... Even with the plugs, the rattles seem to vibrate the very bones in my head. They override the white-noise machine on my bedside table, and the fan in the corner. I'm not going to sleep tonight...

What feels like hours pass by until I am dragged from half-consciousness with a start. It takes a few moments before I realize it's because I am suddenly cold, the blankets covering me losing their effectiveness as my breath fogs before my face. Eyes wide in terror, I strain my vision around the shadows of the studio apartment, trying to find the shapes I hope to not be there...

*Join us in remembrance...*

My gaze is snapped back to the foot of my bed, where my fears are realized...

*Join us frozen in time...*



The tall shadow looms over me, eyeless gaze boring into my own...

*Until all clouds are gathered...*

I am unable to move, my body feels frozen as it extends a gnarled hand towards me, long sharp nails glinting in the low light of my alarm clock...

*Gathered over mine...*

I am brought back in a moment to senior year again, to the vigil, to the chanting shadows...and to realization...

*Their chants are not in remembrance... They are an invitation...*

The realization shocks my core, distracts me from the sensation of cold hands grasping at my body through the mattress. They encompass me, clasping every limb, eventually moving to cover my face...

The darkness they bring is complete, yet feels oddly comforting, like something I've been searching for yet never knew I was, as I lose consciousness and sink into this void at last...

*There are few that can hear it, the rattling of bones and of grating breath when Remembrance walks from the void...*

*Those who do are special, but not blessed for they will join them eventually with a singular realization: **That death is not the end, when you were never alive in the first place.***



## Translated Japanese Story

初めて聞いたのは、私は八歳だった。

自宅裏で立ち、涙が顔を伝わって落ち、足の前に折箱が置いた。あれは三匹目のハムスターの死を目にあった時だ。朝起きた時、小屋でハムスターの体が冷えてくになり、動かなかった。あの時、両親を起こさなかった。

前に、間に合いの墓穴を掘るために、ガレージから持って来た鋤に穴ぼこを使い、芝草を離し、ミミズを切った。小さい靈魂に短い祈りを言い、丸まっちい指が握っていた後で、涙が泣けた。

そして、聞こえた。

先日、母が買った新しい風鈴と考え、土産物屋から大きく、木造の物、三年間から引越すことを祝するために。

でも、母はまだ吊るしてない、ガレージで鋤のとなりに置いてあった。

音はスカスカにガチャガチャし、吐く息いうを軋り、口ごもったの言の音量が増えた。

急に一陣の風のように音が消え去った。ぞくぞくと墓穴に折箱を置き、最後の「さよなら」をささやき、土に埋めた。その後で、ぜんぜんハムスターを飼っていない、次のコミュニティガレージセールで小屋とおもちゃを売った。

あの音を忘れた。

十五歳の時、私は病室であの音が再度聞こえた。父は長い間病気だが、強情で、自分で症状を治せると言い張った。

「免疫システムは強いんだよ！僕は大丈夫だよ！」

私と母は病院の待合室から引き出された時、「大丈夫だ」と考えた。母の後ろについて前かがみになり、ティンエイジの心の中でヘリコプターの子育てされるの被害者だと思って、どこか別の所に出て行った。

もちろん詭謀だけ、心の中で恟然だった。

「三段レベルの癌となてしまっています。」

そして、ニュースは何全てを叩き壊した。あの日の後で、毎日は外科手術、クラスの欠席、病院の見舞い、サポートグループなどでいっぱいになった。不鮮明の五カ月が過ぎた。

父が亡くなった土曜日もある音が聞こえた。私は遠い隅で柔らかい椅子に座り、隠れ家と留守の家に落ち着いた。床の上、いすのとなりに重ねた宿題を置き、目はぼかんとテレビを見、画面で深夜ドラマを映し出し、気にも留めなく没入しなかった。ベッドのとなりのテーブルの上で置時計は午後 10 : 48 を映し出し、初めて寝た。

先ずおぼろげでもう少しでおもちやのようなガチャガチャ音が来た。たぶんプラスチックの音だ。誰か外にいたか？

そしたら、吐く息が来た。その時、もっと威嚇的でうるさく、低くなり、石をすり潰したようなガラガラ音だ。部屋が数度冷えるのを感じた。その時、周辺視覚は黒くなり、視界の辺幅で物影が揺曳した、部屋の切迫が増え。息ができなかった。

八歳の時よりその時のほうが判然になった音がガチャガチャした。

「私たち. . . 私たちと. . . 離すまで. . . いる. . . 」

後で、来た暗闇は全面的だった、残った夜が思い出せなかった。次の朝、違いだけは私の肩身の巻き付きで重い暗黒で、医者と看護師が駆け回った。

「ご愁傷様でございます. . . ご愁傷様でございます. . . ご愁傷でございます. . . 」

高校中その暗黒が残った。スポーツをしたり、サークルを一緒にしたり、成績を受けたりするのににかかわりなく物理的な量目が残った。

大学の四年生の時、さらに悪くなった。レポートと面接の間、ほかの人に気を配らなかった。この前のロマンスが悪く終わり、ルームメートはあまり帰らない、現実めからカフェイン起因性の揺れの間で私は生きた。400 のレベルの講義で私の後ろに座った女性は三週間授業を欠席したことにさえ気が付かなかった。

卒業の一週間前、学生の生活のビルの前にコートヤードの中で半通夜が起こった。午後十時だが、私たちの上に空で少し星があり、コンクリートに沈黙して立った。ローソクは小さい点を作り、学生の顔に黄金色の光を放った。私の肩身の上の量目は背中 of 皮膚を引かないくて、皮膚と筋肉を切らなかったら、美しくなったであろう。

女性の友達は話していて、記憶と形容語を言ったが、私は何も聞こえなかった。またガチャガチャが始まった。あの音が聞こえた時以来と同じ音だ。知らなかったの恐怖の名



前と同じような音を見つけた。風で骨がガチャガチャしているような音だ。喘ぎ声が聞こえ、耳にうるさく、首に冷たく、寒くて重い空気が押した。目交いにローソクがかすんだ。光が薄れ、光源から集まったの個人の間の超空洞に引いた。

そして、超空洞からあいつらは来た。私たちの上に高く、黒くて、猫背の人影は迫り来た。夕風に揺れながら。言った声は彼らの顔から来るはずだ。

「私たちと記憶と一緒にする．．．私たちと止まった時間で一緒にする．．．全部雲が集まっているまで．．．私の最愛の上で集まっている．．．」

祈りか崇拜のように言葉が度々連呼し、絶え間ない練習で骨に刻み込むように話した。真言のように、音律と見なかった楽器と揺れて話した。

私が逃げ走る時、他の人が気がつかなかったと思う。火糞は手を焼けさせ、目は恐怖と広くになった。

それ以外、ガチャガチャがどこでもある。今、長い時間走っていることを感じている。一年間以上同じ仕事が働けない、両手に数えられる以上に引っ越しことがある。音が聞けないために、耳栓を入れながら寝ている。

でも、今晚は特に悪い。耳栓を入れても、ガチャガチャは頭の骨を震わせている。音はベッドのとなりのテーブルの上のホワイトノイズ幾と隅の扇風機を無効にする。今晚は、私は寝られない．．．

多い時間が過ぎたようだ、びっくりと意識朦朧から目覚めるまで。少し時間も過ぎて、急に寒くなったことを気がついた。かけた毛布は実効性を失い、顔の前に息が霧になっている。恐怖で目は広く、ワンルームマンションの影に目を凝らし、人影を見つけないように願った。

「私たちと記憶と一緒にする．．．」

遠いベッドサイドに視線が引き、そこで恐怖が現実になる。

「私たちと止まった時間で一緒にする．．．」

上に高い影が迫り来、目無しの視線は私の目に穿っている。

「全部雲が集まっているまで．．．」

動けなかった。体が凍ったように感じ、私に人影は節くれだった手を差し伸べた、目覚まし時計の灰明かりに長くて鋭い爪が閃光する。

「私の最愛の上で集まっている．．．」

大学四年生の時間へ、戻された、半通夜へ、吟じたの影へ、気づきへにも．．．

あいつらの吟じることは記憶にじゃない．．．誘いだよ．．．

その理解は私の中心に驚倒し、マットレスから冷たい手を通すの感触から注意を逸らす．．．

それらは私を囲い、四肢を握りる、そして働いてきてやがて顔を覆う。

持っていく暗闇は全面的が、不思議に安気を感じる。しかし見つけるが、知らない間に探していた何かのようになる。あげく、意識を失い、超空洞に沈む。

聞こえる人たちは少なく、骨のガチャガチャと息のギリギリの音する、超空洞から「記憶」が歩く時．．．

こんな人は特別の人だが、賦与じゃないだ。なぜなら一つに気をつくこととやがて来る：死は終わりじゃない、初めからぜんぜん生きていなかったんだから。



## Appendices: Resources

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